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THE

# Commonweal

***HUMANISM AND TECHNOLOGY***

## The Future of Education

**by Thomas Molnar**

***"NOT FOREIGNERS, YET FOREIGN"***

## Puerto Ricans in New York

**by Ivan Illich**

***FROM ITALY***

## Land Reform in Maremma

**by George Lorimer**

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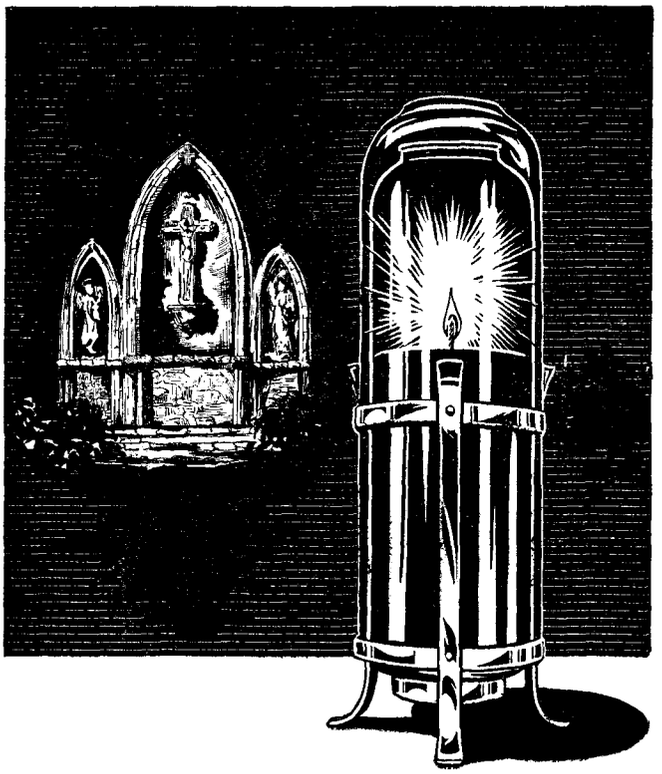

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# THIS WEEK


| | |
|---|---|
| Week by Week | 287 |
| The Future of Education *by Thomas Molnar* | 291 |
| Puerto Ricans in New York *by Ivan Illich* | 294 |
| Land Reform in Maremma *by George Lorimer* | 297 |
| The Stage *by Richard Hayes* | 299 |
| The Screen *by Philip T. Hartung* | 300 |
| Communications | 301 |
| Books | 302 |


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THE
# Commonweal
A Weekly Review of Public Affairs, Literature, and the Arts
THIRTY-SECOND YEAR OF PUBLICATION

## week by week

### MR. KHRUSHCHEV'S FOREIGN POLICY

ONE OF the most amazing documents in history was released by our State Department on June 4. For the text of Mr. Khrushchev's attack on Stalin is exactly that. The text of the speech, though still incomplete, exceeds expectations aroused by the advance reports, startling in themselves.

The speech is of great importance to the West; it is, indeed, important to every country affected by the cold war. The speech is doubly informative. For Mr. Krushchev confirmed much that we already knew or suspected to be true, explained many events and actions that had been puzzling, and presented a history of cruelty and despotism that, even today, is scarcely believable. He thus added to our incomplete history of the Russia of the last thirty years—the reign of Stalin.

But, even more important, he has informed us by the fact of the speech itself about current changes in Soviet Russia. For the speech marks a new point in the history of the Communist Party. Never before has such devastating criticism been officially launched against a legend-hero of the Party, and against the principles and practices by which he governed for several decades. It would seem to strike even at the monolithic structure that is so characteristic of the Party.

If we are to profit from the speech, we must correctly answer two essential questions. First, why did Mr. Khrushchev so harshly denounce Stalin at this time? And second, what effect will his speech have? Many answers to the first question have been advanced. The most convincing are that the speech was a strong move in the internal struggle going on for power within the Party; that it was a personal reaction on the part of people who were themselves humiliated, degraded and threatened by Stalin; and that it was a reaction and counter to strong and widespread resentment among the Russian people.

Although the first two reasons help account for some of the energy with which the speech was given, only the last properly accounts for the fact that it was given at all. So far had Stalin's reign of terror extended itself that almost every family in Russia gave a member, relative or close friend to death or imprisonment. But the West can take little comfort in the resentment that exists among the Russian people. For it is just this that Mr. Khrushchev's speech is intended to subdue. And the present Russian leaders have been careful, not to share, but to delegate the blame and responsibility for the worst crimes. With this and the consequent relaxing of pressures, the Russian people will feel that their condition is improved, as it undoubtedly is. Mr. Khrushchev's speech, if this surmise correctly accounts for it, will strengthen the Soviet Union, not weaken it.

BUT what of the second question, that concerning the effect of the speech outside of Russia? For to deny that the speech will have a significant effect on Communist satellites, neutral countries, radical and socialist groups, and individuals is to tilt at the obvious. Impressive evidence has already accumulated. Tito has emerged a new hero after the denunciation of Stalin and is again a Russian ally. Neutral countries have been wooed so that, to paraphrase Orwell, many countries are neutral but some are less neutral than others. Front-groups are forming in France and Italy. Leading Socialist theorists in England are becoming apologists for the present Soviet regime. People in the free countries are redefecting to what they consider new and improved conditions.



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In the face of this, to say, as some of our statesmen have, that nothing significant has changed in our foreign relations is to deny reality. These changes are upon us. We must see that our policy conforms to present conditions, not to an image we have retained from the past.

We can recognize that the long-range goals of the Communist leaders remain the same, that Communism and the free world will be forever antagonistic. But when the antagonism takes on a new form we must recognize and deal with it. It is clear that we have not yet caught up with recent events. When President Eisenhower said that we would respond to Russian visitors by sending corresponding personages to Russia he did more than reveal our failure to plan; he declared such failure as policy. And when the President, Vice President and the Secretary of State made conflicting statements about our attitude toward neutral countries, they again revealed that we are still unsuccessfully groping for a policy. We have not, in other words, fully realized the best way to deal with the new tactics of the Party, upon which Mr. Khrushchev's speech sheds so much light.

## THE PRESIDENT'S ILLNESS

AT THIS WRITING, President Eisenhower is still in the hospital, although the first alarm over his condition has subsided. Presumably it will be some weeks before he will declare his political intentions, yet the President was hardly out of the anesthetic before some Republican leaders were assuring the world that he would undoubtedly run again. GOP spokesmen simply cannot face the idea that Mr. Eisenhower might take himself out of the race, and to understand why, one has only to consider what would happen if he did. The convention is only weeks away; what other Republican would have a good chance of winning?

Even if Mr. Eisenhower does run again, there is no doubt that health will now be more of an issue in the campaign; the Democratic candidate, whoever he may be, gained that much. Yet, in the first few hours after Mr. Eisenhower was stricken, national concern cut across party lines. Although the expressions of sympathy from his political opponents could have been mere formalities, most of them did not seem to be; in particular, those of Mr. Truman and Mr. Stevenson seemed spontaneous and genuine, and Governor Harriman of New York called for a day of prayer for the stricken President. Here, then, was a good measure of Mr. Eisenhower the man, and consequently of his great political strength—his capacity to arouse respect and affection, regardless of political differences. No wonder Republican leaders consider him their greatest asset in many a decade.

## ORGANIZING DRIVE

TO SOME it may be startling to realize that despite the prominence of the AFL-CIO the great majority of this nation's wage-earners remain unaffiliated with any labor union, national or independent. That is, however, the fact. Figures just issued by the National Bureau of Economic Research show that less than one-third of our nonfarm workers are organized even today. New York State, with its two million union members, is just above the national average; the range extends from the state of Washington, which is better than half organized, to the Carolinas, where union workers comprise less than one in ten.

If a worker has no union, what means are at his disposal for obtaining adequate wages and working conditions? For those covered, there is the national minimum wage law which has established the floor of one dollar an hour. He can, as an individual, or in concert with a few like-minded fellow-workers, refuse to work unless he secures better terms. But he is actually unable to exert any effective pressure in this haphazard, disorganized fashion, especially when he has any dependents. And where the management of an unorganized plant is desirous of paying better wages and seeks to improve working conditions, it is often held back by the fear of competition with rivals that have little thought of doing better by their employees.

## NEXT WEEK

HAROLD C. HINTON writes about the changes that have been taking place in Soviet and Chinese foreign policy.

"In Russia, the Chinese people are generally referred to with the qualifying adjective 'great,' which is used for no other people but the Russians. In China, praise is continually heaped on the Soviet Big Brother. Yet even granting a fundamental community of interest, serious differences of policy can still exist."



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Americans are coming to pride themselves more and more on the high living standards and other benefits that derive from our system of "people's capitalism." To paraphrase a recent institutional display advertisement, ours is an economic system in which all the participants share both the benefits and the responsibilities. Yet is such sharing really possible when two-thirds of the nation's non-farm workers have only their individual skills and energies as bargaining counters—while competition is often so intense that production costs, including wages, are under relentless pressure to be kept at a minimum? It is often the case, to be sure, that workers, individually or as a group, so far have no real responsibility even where there is a union. Without a union it is obvious that the workers will have no corporate responsibility whatever.

All this underlines the importance of the first joint AFL-CIO organizing drive since the big merger of the two unions. It is in the textile industry, and the South—with its 575,000 unorganized textile workers—will be the principal scene of operations. The organizers face added difficulties in those states which have right-to-work laws. There are also reports of Southern communities where an attempt will be made to get visiting organizers to swear that they oppose desegregation before permitting them to approach the workers in local plants. The obstacles are formidable, but the stake is high.

## EXCHANGING VISITS

PERHAPS AMENITIES between the United States and the Soviet Union under its new dispensation have now reached a point where it is possible to arrive at an acceptable general formula. Surely, if the Iron Curtain has been abhorrent to the Western world, the possibility of its partial lifting is extremely welcome. Americans instinctively feel that the more the Russians learn about our way of doing things the better. There is even a growing interest over here in certain Soviet scientific and artistic achievements. By and large we have always had a friendly feeling for the Russian people.

On the other hand, even under its new guise the Soviet regime continues to repel us. Its crimes against whole peoples, its slave labor camps, hostility to religion and to civil liberties, coupled with its concentration on armaments and its ambition to enslave the world, make it impossible for us to give any impression that we countenance such enormities. That is why official good-will missions between Washington and Moscow are clearly out of the question. It is the reason that some caution should be exercised in exchanging visits between military experts. But whatever risks would be involved in manifold visits and return visits between American and Russian artists, economists, scholars, musicians, tourists, building experts, students, entertainers and others are well worth the taking, especially at this stage.

## MR. CHOTINER UNDER FIRE

TO REVERSE the phrase in many a campaign eulogy, we are willing to yield to almost anyone in our admiration for Murray M. Chotiner as a political figure. A California lawyer long active in Republican politics, Mr. Chotiner has played a leading role in several campaigns, most notably as Richard Nixon's campaign manager in 1952, and he has been generally credited, if that is the word, with master-minding the kind of campaign that hits hard, often, and, most importantly, low. Nonetheless, we think Mr. Chotiner has lately been receiving very poor treatment from the press and from the Senate Investigations subcommittee, under the chairmanship of Senator John McClellan, Democrat of Arkansas.

During the Senate inquiry into possible irregularities in connection with government contracts, two of Mr. Chotiner's clients were queried about possible bribes to government officials, and both refused to answer. Much has been made of this, although it ought to be taken for granted that no lawyer should be condemned simply because some of his clients may have engaged in dubious practices; if this rule is to be abandoned, half the lawyers in the country will be in trouble. In the course of its investigation, the Senate subcommittee has issued subpenas for records and files pertaining to some of Mr. Chotiner's clients. Mr. Chotiner says the material the subcommittee wants contains communications between lawyer and clients which normally are considered to be privileged; so far he has refused to hand them over without a waiver from his clients. In addition, Mr. Chotiner charges that the Senate investigators have served subpenas on clients and banks "to open up their books and records to the committee's investigators, when no charge of improper conduct has been leveled against them." Mr. Chotiner completely denies any improper conduct in connection with government contracts, and he protests that the committee's actions



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against him constitute a "political fishing expedition."

We do not, of course, have any personal knowledge as to the propriety or lack of it in Mr. Chotiner's conduct in Washington—although if there is a question of violations of the law here, a regular law-enforcement agency would seem more qualified to carry out such an investigation than a Senate subcommittee. But whatever the outcome of the investigation, it seems certain that Mr. Chotiner's reputation and his financial standing will be injured because of the way it is being carried out. Not many months ago, for example, Mr. Chotiner gave a much publicized exposition of his method of campaigning for the benefit of local GOP leaders, under the auspices of the national Republican headquarters; since this investigation started, however, GOP leaders have quietly announced that he will take no active part in the Republican campaign this fall. And although he is a successful lawyer, Mr. Chotiner is hardly likely to win new business during this investigation; not many clients relish the thought of Senate investigators plowing through their files.

All in all, the Chotiner case raises again some important questions about Congressional committees. Must so much of their work be done under a spotlight? In an instance like this, can such committees ignore the traditionally confidential relationship between client and lawyer? How can a genuine investigation be distinguished from a partisan fishing expedition? And, above all, is there any limit to the powers of subpena exercised by such Congressional committees? Mr. Chotiner is now suffering from the fact that many questions like these have never been satisfactorily answered.

## RACE AND RELIGION

IN A RECENT message to the National Conference of Christian and Jews, President Eisenhower voiced the opinion that "problems of such magnitude as American race relations and intercultural good will can be dealt with most effectively on the moral and spiritual plane. Courageous action by the leaders of the three great religious traditions in our country is basic to all other steps that must be taken." If Mr. Eisenhower means by this that the primary responsibility for implementing the laws against segregation rests upon religious leaders, or that they should first determine "all other steps that must be taken," then we think his position is open to serious question.

On the whole, the history of the Negro in America makes clear that his lot has been improved by decisions and actions taken on the political and economic levels, rather than on the "moral and spiritual plane." It is significant, in this connection, that the most compelling invitation to full citizenship for the Negro came, not as a result of pleas or programs by religious leaders, but as a result of the Supreme Court decision which outlawed segregation in the public schools. No matter how much we may regret it, history shows that in the long struggle to achieve the conditions of full humanity, the Negro's most effective help has come from the court-house, not the church. Indeed, the various court decisions throughout the nation's history which have insisted on the legal rights of the Negro have often caused division and turmoil within church memberships, rather than calling forth a unanimous support based upon moral and spiritual values.

Thus, a recent survey conducted for the *Catholic Digest* shows that while forty-two per cent of the white people throughout the country favor segregation, seventy-five per cent of white Protestants and seventy-six per cent of white Catholics in the South support it. The same survey would seem to indicate that education, rather than religion as such, was the determining factor in changing interracial attitudes. In the South, eighty-seven per cent of the whites who had only an elementary education favored segregation, compared to fifty-four per cent of white college graduates. The same general ratio was also observed between white elementary school and college graduates in the North.

In view of facts such as these, the President would seem to be placing a burden where it does not belong when he affirms that "courageous action" by the religious leaders of America is "basic to all other steps that must be taken." The "basic" element remains what it has always been—legislation aimed at interracial justice, and the vigilance of the courts over the execution of such legislation. The further problem of effecting an atmosphere in which such legislation will be accepted by the people will probably be solved in the years ahead by education, supported by religion. To suggest, as does the Rev. Paul C. Reinert, S.J., president of St. Louis University, "that education may well be the key to the eventual general acceptance of racial legislation" is neither to over-estimate education nor under-estimate religion. It is to be aware, to a deeper degree than was President Eisenhower in his recent statement, of the nature and responsibilities of both.



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# The Future of Education

**"EDUCATIONAL EMPHASIS HAS BEEN SHIFTING FROM THE INDIVIDUAL AND HIS EXCEPTIONAL QUALITIES TO THE AVERAGE MAN AND HIS SOCIAL USES"**

THOMAS MOLNAR

TO THE dispassionate historian of a later age our educational crisis, while acute and significant in itself, will appear as only *one* among many indications of the general crisis of our culture, society, and the individual. As a matter of fact, the public and private disputations concerning education, its inadequacies or effectiveness, find their origin in the critical complexity—and resulting strain—of modern society, which makes it no longer possible for the observer to follow the Cartesian method of reaching clear and distinct notions. The social, the economic, and the psychological factors form such a tight bundle with problems the scholar may tend to study on their own merits alone, that the context that these factors constitute is often credited with more importance than the central issue.

One thing is certain: the educational emphasis in recent decades, and progressively, has been shifting from the individual and his exceptional qualities to the average man and his social uses. This may be veiled by the customary reference to "individualized" teaching, and to courses allegedly fitting the need of the individual student, yet the social skills of cooperation and group manipulation are clearly given the predominant role. As a professor of education recently urged in the *Bulletin* of the American Association of University Professors, the schools should discourage divisiveness, and lay stress on the virtues of teamwork.

Behind these recommendations and practices there is, naturally, an ideology. What makes discussions difficult between partisans of different schools of thought on the matter is that an ideology never appears as such, that is, in the modest garb of a partial truth, but as *the* truth, pure and simple. It seems, for the time being, that those who consider the schools as preparatory for a way of life and for a vocation have a clear advantage over those who conceive of school and of learning as primarily the place and process for perfecting the intellect. This advantage comes to the former through the ideology which the great majority in twentieth-century industrial society share; without this social backing the concept of the new role of schools would not have materialized.

We may disagree with this concept and deplore its anti-intellectualist bent, but it is necessary that we understand the nature of the forces which impose it on the minds of millions. First, we ought to realize that the educational philosophy in all ages of history expressed the beliefs, values and aspirations of a particular society. When we say "society," however, we mean *that* part of the total community which, having prestige and authority, actually sets the standard for the rest. To limit our observations to a relatively recent period, it is evident that, coinciding with middle-class predominance after 1870, the great nations of Western Europe imbued their school-system with a philosophy that 1) helped establish the *individualistic* mentality we connect with bourgeois conduct of affairs in business and in public life, and 2) made provisions for the slow and controlled admission of young members of the lower classes who, in their gratefulness for this opportunity, became reliable supporters of the existing order. Incidentally, by this process of co-option, the bourgeoisie succeeded in creaming off the best talents of the peasantry and industrial workers, leaving them, as it were, without natural leaders. The public school in England, the secular *lycée* in France, and the gymnasium and *Realschule* in Bismarck's Germany were, with variations according to the character and needs of the respective nations, expressly fitted to produce individuals who, at home and in the colonies, fought the battles of industrial and commercial expansion, helping maintain all the while the class-structure on which domestic peace rested.

THIS WAS the picture fifty to seventy years ago. I do not now intend to judge whether the reality it depicts was good or bad, but merely to state that it has very considerably changed. We no longer speak, in the West, of a middle-class society, or if we do, what we mean is that by a steady and rapid process, upward and downward, society is becoming level. As M. Raymond Aron writes in a recent number of

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*Diogenes* (No. 10, 1955), "it is improbable that stratification tends to be rigid in Western societies as conflicts become less and less ideological and political. People are concerned with which system increases the volume of collective resources the fastest, and reduces the disparity of status between groups."

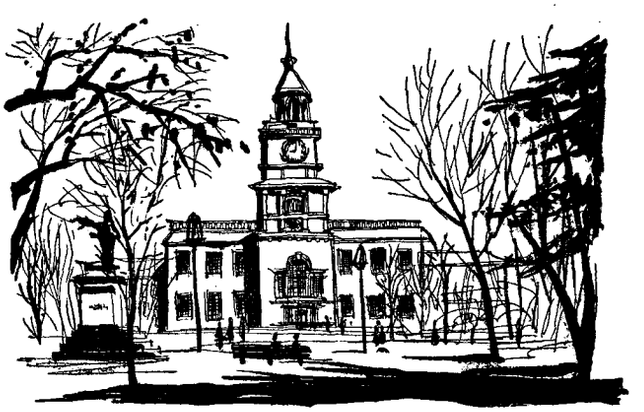
What are the consequences of this development on education? And what will they be in the future? (It would not be correct to omit the fact that besides the transformations of society and its classes, the revolution in the sciences, in the media of communication, in our concept of history, etc., are immensely important elements which must be considered in a discussion about changes in education. Indeed, the combination of all these factors is what characterizes these changes best.) In the eyes of bourgeois society, by and large, the terms "gentleman" and "educated man" were synonymous. Learnedness—and this meant the knowledge of the classics and the respect for humanistic values—went hand in hand with an *attitude* on the part of the student and the scholar, setting them apart from, and, in a very real sense, above the rest of society. Learning seemed to guarantee the self-discipline and even a degree of asceticism that were, at least in theory, the price paid for political and material advantages. As a consequence, the bourgeois parent took it for granted that he must send his child to a school where a "classical" curriculum was provided; this was the "thing" to do since the "best" people were doing it. To a very large extent, then, this parental behavior had no roots in personal convictions concerning the timeless value of such disciplines as mathematics, history, literature, philosophy and Latin; rather, it was the expression of the desire to imitate the group immediately above, and to tread the secure path of success, leading, in fortunate cases, towards the apex of the social pyramid.

But we no longer live in a bourgeois society and under the aegis of its principles. The young man and woman today need the humanistic background less and less as an instrument for economic advancement. For one thing, with the establishment of peaceful social relationships between classes, the middle-class student needs no shields and weapons to fight classes below and above, that is to defend his privileges against the former, and wring new advantages and rights from the latter; for another thing, he has no interest to parade with symbols of his exclusivity (and humanistic education *was* such a symbol), for in an increasingly classless society exclusivity arouses suspicions and is easily branded subversive.

This is not to say that excellence in scholarship and serious devotion to higher studies will disappear or even diminish. There will always be exceptional minds, and we may be sure that a substantial number among them will choose those disciplines which we still associate—our vocabulary being influenced by a bygone age—with the highest human achievements. But it can be predicted without exaggeration that the results of these individual efforts will penetrate neither the fabric of the public mind, nor the philosophy of the leaders. Scattered and socially inefficient, the humanistic ideas and values will have an air of unreality and of gratuity about them, and the humanists themselves will be regarded with a sort of benevolent tolerance. The climate of society will favor men trained in the techniques of cooperation, and will ignore those who, with an irritating constancy, seek to call into question the basic assumptions of their environment.

WILL FUTURE society be able to disregard completely the humanistic values in general, and the value of humanistic scholarship in its educational system? Very likely not. But, as Mr. Christopher Dawson writes in the Spring issue of *Thought,* "we must face the fact that classical studies . . . have become just another specialism in a world of competing specialisms, most of which are vocational rather than liberal studies." In other words, while the humanistic studies themselves may not change, the role assigned to them will become radically different from what it used to be.

Not only college professors, but also leaders of business and officials of government who command a wide view over the horizon of problems of immediate importance, agree that the pragmatic education of recent decades has neglected to equip the student with the basic moral and intellectual baggage that a modern man, as citizen, soldier, worker, businessman or engineer, needs. In the March 1956 issue of the *Atlantic Monthly,* Mr. Shepard, a New Jersey oil executive, expressed his desire to see more liberal arts graduates seek and obtain employment in industry, and mentioned the fields of education, psychology, anthropology and public relations *expertise* as particularly fit to be made use of in industrial processes. On the other hand, in France, the traditional bulwark of classical-humanistic education, studies are made on the basis of





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reports from various ministries with the object of re-orientating a large percentage of the youth from careers in teaching, law, and in letters to those that the country needs more, that is, engineering, science, and business. In other words, in both the United States and France the tendency is to find an equilibrium of education, and a fairer distribution of the available talents, in accordance with the requirements of an increasingly level but complex society.

M. H. I. Marrou, the noted historian of education, gives voice to this shift of emphasis in the domain of education when he speaks of the richness of Western civilization, which "has reached such a degree of complexity that the macrocosm of collective civilization can no longer be squeezed within the microcosm of individual culture." Humanistic studies, he says, "can be but *one* among the varieties of possible education offered to modern man." M. Marrou's motives are announced with the sincerity of a man and scholar alarmed at the prospect of what he calls "a new barbarism"; for this fate would befall mankind if the representatives of the classical heritage failed to make concessions to other forms of culture, based on social cohesion and economic productivity.

There was a time when this was not so obvious. The old Renan, having spent an afternoon praising the scientifically organized society of the future before his young visitor, Romain Rolland, answered thus to the latter's distressed question: "You speak of the weaker souls who cannot live without religion! *Eh bien,* so much the worse for them if they are overwhelmed by science! Why did they have to seek for truth, in the first place?" Today no responsible person would speak that way, as is clear from Mr. Shepard's above-mentioned article, and in the statements of many other business leaders and social engineers, concerned, for example, with the possible consequences of automation. Put in simple terms, their problem seems to be this: with reduced time spent in work, and with increased time for leisure, the latter will have to be not only organized, but also filled with content that the customary forms of distraction do not provide. As long as work was a long drudgery, leisure could be light in caliber; to a work that will be clean and casual, there ought to correspond a different, more serious type of entertainment. In the words of a business official, if the masses of men, made practically idle but materially satisfied, turn, driven by boredom, against the machine, Herodotus may prevent the ensuing destruction better than Marilyn Monroe.

ACCORDING to these predictions and recommendations, humanistic education will have to be preserved, but only in one corner of the school curriculum and of communal life. Its beneficial influence will be recognized but not, as before, for its value *per se,* or its value as a symbol of social status, but on account of its quasi-therapeutic effects. Thus, except for isolated individuals and groups, humanistic education will cease to be a means of communication with the so-called transcendental values; instead, it will be integrated into the over-all social process, and used as a means of sublimating certain obscure drives that cannot be otherwise diagnosed and exorcised.

Education in the future will mirror, as it did in the past, the society which offers it to the young. The difference will be that of the societies themselves, past and future, of the problems they face and of the answers they find. This much, however, may be taken for granted: as an ingredient in any foreseeable civilization, humanistic education will have a place in the curriculum, for it may maintain within society a modicum of respect for the non-measurable wisdom of the ages, and may grant to the individual a relief from the daily exercise of social discipline. Beyond this, humanistic education, on the retreat for several decades, is not likely to go; the schools of the future, even more than the schools of the present, will be so designed as to imitate life and its "real situations" as closely as possible. The stress, consequently, will be upon guaranteeing the social machinery against any damage that lies dormant in dissent, and upon training the youth—as I recently heard a professor of education put it—in the techniques of common effort and the gratification found in collective discoveries.

Under these circumstances, it is not unlikely that the humanistic values will find refuge, and a new soil for blooming, in institutions which lie beyond our sphere of prediction. From Plato's Academy to the great universities of the West a certain form of school has preserved the continuity of our humanistic tradition. But, after all, such a tradition is not inescapably bound up either with the buildings, or with the venerable nomenclature of the institutions themselves; the function of teaching and learning may be carried on without the elaborate setting that modern schools provide; indeed, it may go on wherever men of good will and honest intellect congregate.

## AN APPEAL

Rev. L. Crenier, O.S.B., of Ste. Marie de Mont Pélé, St. Pierre, Martinique, French West Indies, has established a People's Kitchen for the many destitute living near the monastery. Dom Crenier needs used clothing and linen as well as powdered milk and other foodstuffs. Packages should not exceed 72 inches in perimeter or 11 pounds in weight. A tag (available at the post office) should be affixed to each package listing the contents. Airmail postage for monetary donations is 10¢ to Martinique.



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"NOT FOREIGNERS, YET FOREIGN"

# Puerto Ricans in New York

IVAN ILLICH

AFTER THE introduction of the quota system in 1924, it seemed as if the melting process in New York City were finally about to catch up with the number of people tossed into the pot. Then, in the late forties, the city was presented with a novel challenge, an invasion of American-born "foreigners," the Puerto Ricans. In Marcantonio's heyday (1943) there were less than thirty-five thousand of them in New York; at present there are more than half a million, and indications are that the migration has not yet reached its peak.

These Puerto Ricans are not foreigners, and yet they are more foreign than most of the immigrants who preceded them. About this seeming paradox the well-meaning should be well-informed, since to be received kindly because you are a foreigner is not much different from being received kindly because, "after all, all men are alike." In both cases, chances are that the man who receives you is determined never to come to know you.

If a man designates you a foreigner, on the one hand, he usually precludes any possibility of knowing what is proper to your group besides not being of his own. If, on the other hand, he misunderstands St. Paul's instruction to make himself Jew with the Jews and Greek with the Greeks by an exegesis such as "We are all Americans," he again denies your right and his to have a background, to be human, with roots reaching down in history to times before you both were.

This fallacy is at the bottom of the attitude of many well-meaning people toward the Puerto Rican immigrants: Let them do what the Irish or Italians did, or let them attempt what the Jews attempted; let them grow gradually through their own national parishes, territorial ghettoes and political machines to full "Americanization"; let them vociferously assert that they are as good Americans as the man next door. These attitudes are very common in New York, where the arrival of successive migratory waves is taken for granted. It is too often gratuitously assumed that the future novel about the Puerto Rican journey will be fashioned after either *The Last Hurrah* or *Marjorie Morningstar,* or will be a combination of both.

The welfare investigator who says to José Rivera, "My parents went through the same experience," neither lies nor expresses xenophobia—he just oversimplifies, like the politician who tries again to use methods which worked when Italian was spoken in Harlem.

WHEN THE Irish and the Germans came here a century ago, New York City was faced with a challenge of a kind never experienced before and of a size never to be duplicated. In 1855, one-third of the city's population (500,000) consisted of immigrants who had arrived in the previous decade; against this proportion the one-fifteenth of the city's population which in 1955 consisted of recently arrived Puerto Ricans (again 500,000) seems insignificant.

In the days of the heavy influx to America, wave after wave of immigrants arrived, settled down and became accustomed to new patterns. The newcomers spoke different languages, worshipped in different churches, came from different climates, wooed in different fashions, ate different dishes and sang different songs. But under these apparent differences they had much in common. They came from the Old Continent and arrived as refugees or settlers to become Americans and to stay for good. They brought their own clergy, rabbi, priest or minister, and the symbols of past millenia which were their own, St. Patrick, the Maffia or Loretto, no less than the Turnverein. They settled in special sections of the city and kept to themselves for years before they ventured to take part in that experience new to all of them, life in a pluralistic society. They fell into a common pattern, and it is no wonder that those who had been here long enough to consider themselves part of a settled stratum fell into the habit of assuming *a priori* that each new incoming group would be analogous to theirs. This assumption, in fact, proved to be true until after the second world war, with the exception of two groups, the Orientals and the Southern Negroes.

Then, suddenly, the Puerto Ricans arrived en masse. New York had never before known such an invasion, an invasion of Americans who came from an older part of the New World into New York, which had been part of the diocese of San Juan long before Henry Hudson had discovered Manhattan. And New York had never had to deal with born American citizens who in their schools had learned English as a foreign language, yet who went to the polls to vote.

Father Illich, for several years a priest of the New York Archdiocese, was recently appointed Vice-Rector of the Catholic University of Puerto Rico.



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These strange Americans were sons of a Catholic country where for centuries slaves had found refuge, where the population of a little over two million is overwhelmingly white but where a difference in the shade of the skin is no impediment, either to success or to marriage. Yet theirs was the first sizable group coming from overseas into New York to be tagged by many as "colored," much less because of the racial heredity of some than for the vaguely sensed great difference between them and former new arrivals.

This was a new type of immigrant: not a European who had left home for good and strove to become an American, but an American citizen, who could come here for one harvest and return home for vacation with a week's salary spent on a coach ticket. This was not the fugitive from racial or religious persecution in his own country, but the child of "natives" in a Spanish colony or perhaps the descendant of a Spanish official in the colonial service; not a man accustomed to be led by men of his own stock—priest, politician, rebel or professor—but for four hundred years a subject in a territory administered by foreigners, first Spanish, then American, only recently come into its own.

THE NEW arrival from Puerto Rico was not the Christian in his own right who received the Faith from the sons of his own neighbors, but the fruit of missionary labor typical of the Spanish empire. He was a Catholic, born of parents who were also Catholics, yet he received the Sacraments from a foreigner because the Government was afraid that to train native priests might be to train political rebels.

Even the physical configuration of the world from which he came was different. He was a man from an island where nature is provident and a friend, where field labor means much more harvesting than planting. When nature rebels every few decades, he is powerless; in the hurricanes he cannot but see the finger of God.

Until recently, nobody in Puerto Rico built a house with the idea that it should survive the elements with its strength or withstand the climate with its air-conditioning. What a difference from the Pole and the Sicilian, both of whom built to withstand nature, climate and time, both of whom built to separate their lives from that of nature. One might have come from the Russian steppe or the ghetto and the other from an olive-grove on the coast, but both knew what winter meant; they knew that a house was there to protect them from the cold, a place within which to make a home. It was easy for the Pole and the Sicilian to settle in tenements and to live confined there. But the new immigrant from the tropics knew no winter, and the home he left was a hut in which you slept but *around* which you lived with your family. The hut was the center of his day's activities, not their limit. To come to a tenement, to need heat, to need glass in your windows, to be frowned on for tending to live beyond your doors—this was all contrary to the Puerto Rican's traditional habits, and as surprising to him as it is for the New Yorker to realize that for any immigrants these basic assumptions of his life should be surprising.

The new Puerto Rico, the Puerto Rico of 1956, is studded with concrete houses and opens a new factory every day. It is a proving ground for the most advanced forms of community organizations, and it has the fastest vanishing-rate for illiteracy and the fastest-falling mortality in the world. Yet these facts must not make us think that the traditional outlook of its people has changed or will change tomorrow. These material improvements are the incredible outcome of the first decade of Munoz Marin's administration, but they do not wipe out the Island's past nor are they intended to make of San Juan a suburb of New York.

The differences between the Puerto Rican migration and the influx of Europeans are fundamental. Indeed, in the shallowness of his roots the Puerto Rican is more foreign to the European, with whom he is so often thrown into the same pot, than to the American, whose history and culture in this respect are so similar. These differences account for much of the distinctive behavior characteristics of Puerto Ricans in New York, and the lack of knowledge of these differences accounts for many misunderstandings on the part of old New Yorkers.

Many a Puerto Rican does not leave the Island with a clear plan of settling on the mainland. How can a man who leaves on the spur of the moment, planning to make a fast dollar in New York and be back as soon as he has enough to buy a store, take roots in New York? I remember one woman who was in despair because her husband had disappeared on his way to the cane-fields, carrying his machete. She thought, of course, that a rival had grabbed him from her. And then, after a week, she got a money-order from Chicago. On the way to the cane-field he had run into a hiring gang and decided to try his luck—and



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that was the reason he neglected to come home for dinner. In a case like this, in which a man "drops in" on New York, with no intentions of staying but of eventually commuting "home," how can the transient have the same effect on his neighborhood in New York as the old immigrant who came to stay? Yet the statistical curve of emigration from the Island is in exact correlation with the curve of employment on the mainland. If employment is scarce, the reflux increases correspondingly. Many, even after years in New York, feel they got stuck there because of money.

WITH THE arrival of hundreds of thousands from Puerto Rico and the other Central American States (it is estimated that more than one-fourth of N. Y.'s Spanish-American population is not Puerto Rican), not only a new language but a new pattern of living has been added to the city. Instead of the strangers speaking only a foreign tongue who formerly arrived exhausted from the long journey, American citizens, all of whom know some basic English, arrive in airplanes within six hours of leaving their tropical island.

The old immigrants settled in national neighborhoods; the new commuter spreads out all over the city; ten years after the beginning of the mass influx Spanish has already become ubiquitous in New York. Unlike European immigrants, all Puerto Ricans know some English, and this helped, but there is another factor that has contributed to this spreading to all quarters by South Americans. In former times when a neighborhood became a center for the newest immigrant, it was either a slum or tended to become one. And once a neighborhood had deteriorated it hardly ever was redeemed. The great immigration from Puerto Rico started after World War II, due to such factors as cheap air transportation, acquaintance with the mainland acquired by many during service in the army, rising education under the new political order on the island, and, last but not least, the growing pressure of population which has more than doubled since the beginning of the century. At that same time, the city was embarking on its great slum-clearance program, and the first blocks to be torn down were almost invariably those where the newest immigrant had just settled. As a result, the Puerto Ricans began to be resettled all around town in new projects, and on a non-discriminatory basis.

Considering this dispersal and the tendency to commute to the Island, it is no wonder that there are hardly any Puerto Rican national neighborhoods in the traditional sense. One result is that it is difficult for Puerto Ricans to develop local grass-roots leadership within their own group; either their concentration per city block is too thin, or the intention to stick to the neighborhood is absent, or the necessity to organize with their own is weak because all are citizens who at least understand some English and have official "protection" from the government labor office—the first instance of something like a "Consulate for American Nationals." And there is no doubt that another factor contributing to the relative lack of neighborhood leadership is the lack of a tradition in leadership, caused by hundreds of years of colonial administration.

Thus Puerto Ricans in New York find it more difficult than groups which came before them to form their own in-group leadership, if they do not find it completely impossible. This fact gives them a very real advantage over former migrations in one way, because it almost forces them into an active participation in the established community. On the other hand, the sudden challenge of having to participate in a settled New York community proves too arduous for many who might have been able to become leaders in their own cliques.

A LACK of consideration on the part of civic leaders for the distinctive character of this new Puerto Rican migration, as compared to previous immigrant experiences, can do real damage to the community by either retarding or injuring the new pattern of assimilation which will have to form. If this lack of understanding should be present in the leaders of the Catholic Church, it can seriously damage souls.

One-third of the baptized Catholics in Manhattan and the lower Bronx are Spanish-Americans at this moment. The Puerto Ricans are the first group of Catholics with a distinctly non-European tradition of Catholicism to come to the East Coast. The lack of native priests, due to the colonial and imperialistic atmosphere of more than three hundred years of the Island's history, and also the special approaches due to missionary conditions, have profoundly molded the behavior of Puerto Ricans as Catholics.

Notwithstanding the very recent trend towards rapid urbanization, the majority of Puerto Ricans are dispersed over the steep hills of the interior, living in huts in the midst of small clearings among bananas and *flamoyants,* with magnificent views, but too far from church to attend Mass on every Sunday. Traditionally, they go to the Sacraments on those rare occasions when the priest comes to visit them in the chapel in their *barrio*—but for generations they had to baptize their own children because the priest came so seldom. Regular attendance at Sunday Mass under such circumstances is not a confirmed element of Catholic practice. Living habits of the tropics, feudal-colonial social organization, and the confluence of Indian, African and European culture played their part. The Church's law declaring a marriage between



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two Catholics valid even when not entered into before a priest, if a priest could not be available in less than a month, had an adverse effect on the frequency of marriages in church, and still has today.

"Bad habits" like these are not a sign of lack of Catholic spirit, but rather are effects of a peculiar ecclesiastical history. Many U. S. Catholics are used to a wide variety of national customs in national parishes and a great difference in practices among various ethnic groups; when faced with the lack of "practice" of their faith by Puerto Ricans, they might be tempted to identify them with some other foreign group in whom the effects of a different background show up in similar behavior, or might even deny altogether the Puerto Rican's Catholic background. But for anybody who ever has breathed the atmosphere of the island there is no doubt that theirs is a Catholic culture: children who might never make their First Communion will regularly ask their parents' blessing before leaving the house; people who might never have been taught the catechism will devotedly invoke the names of Our Lord or the Virgin and plaster their homes with holy pictures and sign themselves with the Cross before leaving home. Even the fact that a man refuses to get married in church sometimes testifies for rather than against his Catholicity; he does not want to bind himself forever by a Church marriage.

In Puerto Rico God's house extends from the church into the plaza. Not only do the processions or *posedas* require the out-of-doors as a continuation of the church, but also the church is often too small, and throngs attend at Mass by looking through doors and windows. Unless his neighbor on the mainland understands the different meaning "family," "church," or "home" has for a man from the tropics, he will not understand why José plays the guitar on his doorstep, or why Maria walks from statue to statue during Mass for a little chat with the saints or perhaps enters church only after service, because she is repelled by the formality of the ushers.

All of this points toward the need the Puerto Ricans have to win some respect for their background. *What they need is not more help but less categorization according to previous schemes, and more understanding.* Only thus will they be able to make the unique cultural, political, and economic contribution for which they seem destined: Spanish-Christian tradition, a Catholicism in which is taken for granted an eminently Christian attitude toward the mixing of races, a freshness and simplicity of outlook proper to the tropics, a new pattern of political freedom in association with the United States, a bridge between the hemispheres politically and culturally no less than economically—these are only a few of the assets that the mass migration of Puerto Ricans to the mainland can contribute to New York and the United States.

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**FROM ITALY**

# Land Reform in Maremma

GEORGE LORIMER

EVER SINCE the end of the war, the Christian Democrats in Italy have been working hard to extend their popular support. For people outside the country, it is probably hard to understand why their success has not been more striking. How is it possible that, as in the recent elections, the Left and the Right could still amass so many votes? Some idea of the problem the Christian Democrats face may be had by considering the Maremma region, where an extensive program of land reform has been carried out.

The land reform was designed to break up the large estates, many of which ran well over five thousand acres, leaving approximately one thousand acres maximum to the former owner and distributing the rest by lot to those peasants who wanted land. An exception, however, was made to those who had formerly worked as *mezzadri* (sharecroppers); they were automatically assigned a portion of the land they had worked. The new farms run from about eighteen to thirty-six acres.

The *assegnatari* (peasants who receive land) have to pay for their land over a thirty-year period. The same goes for improvements which the Ente Maremma, the organization which conducts the reform, make on the land. Among the improvements are the building of houses and stables, the digging of wells, the draining or irrigating of fields. These probably cost the Ente Maremma a good deal more than it makes the peasants pay—but still the peasant must pay a sizable

*Mr. Lorimer, an American now in Italy, has contributed to such publications as Il Giornale del Mattino, Il Focolaire, and Politica.*



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amount. The Ente provides long-range contracts for the purchase of livestock, as well.

One cannot but be impressed by the transformation which has occurred in this once rough and rugged terrain. Swamps have been drained, brush and stubbly trees have been cleared away, and in their place there are meadows and fields of wheat. Many miles of new roads crisscross the countryside and, most important, hundreds of families live on the land.

This reform, which was conducted, at least theoretically, for economic and social reasons, should also have led to the harvesting of political fruits. It seemed reasonable to believe that the farmer who owned his farm, thanks to the Christian Democrats, would show his gratitude by giving his vote to that party. This has not happened and one wonders why. The official explanation seems to be the unexpected exhaustion of funds, which has halted much of the action of the reform. However, after having spent days in the area from Grosseto to Tarquinia talking to the peasants, as well as some time in the Northern confines of the Maremma, I feel that this in itself is not the principal reason for the political failure.

THE FIRST thing I discovered was that the peasants did not feel grateful, nor did they see any reason why they should. Generally they regard the reform as not only a necessity but almost as a moral right, and, needless to say, everyone finds it easy to criticize.

One young man explained: "We haven't been given anything; we have to pay for everything we have got. In fact, we even have to pay for things we haven't got. Look there,"—he points to some stubbly grass—"see my vineyard, and there are my drainage ditches . . . equally imaginary!"

There is, too, a general feeling that the land packages are too small, and the Communists have made this their most telling point of attack. They claim that if they were running the reform, there would be bigger farms for everyone.

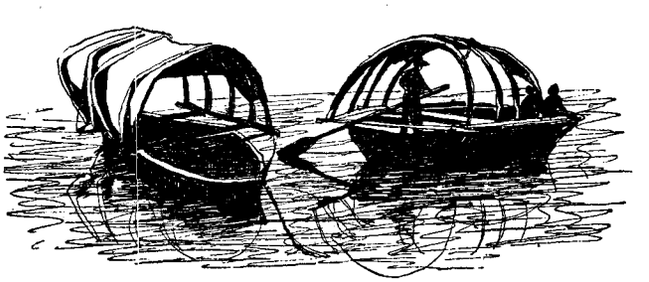
It is true that in many cases the farms really are too small. This, however, is due largely to the fact that the program of land reform is based on a concept of agriculture different from that of the peasants in the region. The basic idea has been to change the Maremma from an area of extensive farming to an area of intensive farming, and the land packages have been formed with this system in mind. However, the vineyards and olive groves involved in intensive cultivation are in many cases not yet planted. Then, even where they have been planted, they cannot be expected to produce much for many years (fifteen for the olives). So, for the moment, farming remains the traditional extensive type, and for this the land is scarcely sufficient.

Related to the problems of too little land is that of too little ability. Most of the new proprietors have never before had the responsibility of running a farm. This means that unless they get a lot of help they will never be able to make ends meet. And, unfortunately, those who are trusted with the job of giving technical and practical assistance are not always the best suited. Many lack the technical preparation (they were the failures in the old system), and some of those who are technically prepared have not been able to adjust to the change in ownership. Many, in fact, fought the reform up to the last minute and then jumped in to win the high-paying jobs, a fact which understandably rankles the *assegnatari*.

One such person described to me the discontent and general malfunctioning of the reform in a way which revealed his complete lack of appreciation for the social basis of the reform, even though his remarks contained some truth.

"Sure, they are all discontented," he said. "You know why? It is just because they have got to stand on their own feet now that the Ente has run out of money. Before that they could come scurrying to us every minute. A loan here, an advance there. . . . Now it is up to them. By next year they will have learned a lot; they won't need the Ente so much. Even now you can see differences. Some of them have got their barns full and are making a lot of cash; others aren't. You know why? They don't have the juice here." (He tapped his forehead.) "They are stupid and they won't admit it; it is they who don't know how to run the land, but they blame it on the Ente. They are a pack of liars! As far as the elections go, it's just too bad that they come this year, but we can't do a thing." Needless to say his approach was not ideal for winning votes or friendship.

Another aspect of the problem comes from the multiplication of personnel. Previously, a peasant had contact with one *fattore* (farm manager), with whom he could reason. Now he is confronted by a system in which several officials replace the *fattore,* plus numerous other experts as well. Unfortunately, there does not seem to be a very clear chain of command or division of powers, and thus everyone advises or directs the *assegnatari*. As the peasants put it, "There are too many bells and we don't know which to listen to." One man, a Communist of long standing, ex-





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plained his own personal opinion even more simply. "All I want is more land and less interference. Why can't they let us be a bit, or at least agree among themselves before they tell us what to do? I am fed up."

COMMUNISM as found here is a strange brand. The most highly convinced Communist seems to be terribly individualistic. I could not find one who wanted land reform based on collective farms, and they seem opposed to any kind of group activity, even cooperatives.

Why do some of these people in the Maremma region continue to vote for the Communist Party? I tried to find out if they really believed in it.

"No," one peasant wife told me, "I am sure if the Communists win things will be worse. Every time we change things are worse. But we'll vote for it just the same. You see, if we vote for 'Democracy' then 'Democracy' goes ahead with its sails full and no one will think any more about us."

A man explained his reason for voting for the Left: "If the reform starts going much worse and they try to take away the land from us, we want to have someone who will make a fuss in Rome. The Communists will do it."

"I don't have anything against the Christian Democrats," another said, "but I vote for the Communists so that there will be someone to keep cracking the whip."

There is no doubt that empty promises have helped to give the Christian Democrats a bad reputation. In the beginning the Ente Maremma pledged a program it could not fulfill. "This was a big mistake," a priest in the area told me. "When you come right down to it, men are not too different from children. If you promise a child two pieces of candy and give him one, he feels cheated. If you promise him two and give two, he is satisfied. If you promise him one and give two, he is overjoyed. It is the same story with the Ente Maremma. It promised more than it could give; now everyone feels cheated, and they are all down on the Ente. If it rains too much or too little, even that will soon be held against it."

All things considered, Maremma illustrates the problem of the Christian Democrats quite well. There are simply not enough people like the *assegnatario* who told me: "Yes, the reform is going badly. Sure, I am tempted to vote for the Left. But I am going to keep on voting for the Christian Democrats; there are other people in the world besides me." The ironic thing is that the Christian Democrats in Italy lose support for what they have not done, without gaining proportionately for what they have done. And that is sad, for if the Christian Democrats have made mistakes, their accomplishments are very substantial.

# THE STAGE

## NOTES AND COMMENTS

CHARLOTTE RAE'S is the brightest of the eight shining morning faces glowing saliently in "The Littlest Revue" (*at the Phoenix*). Miss Rae is a young lady who has inhabited, for some years, the sulphurous climate of what newspaper columnists relentlessly call "the town's smarter *boites*," and her quick, supple, authoritative talent shows the fruit of this arduous initiation. (Night clubs have superseded vaudeville as a training school for variety performers: if you can quell a ringside of boozy New Yorkers, drinking their way up and down the East Side, you could divert, perhaps, a tribe of Mau Mau.) Miss Rae has not yet developed that personal vision which marks the great comic artist—ultimately, for example, Miss Lillie or Miss Gingold are defined by an attitude towards the world, a characteristic stance before experience—but her effects rest nonetheless on a secure base of skill. With a turn of the screw, the ordinary becomes, at her plastic touch, the hideously bizarre. Miss Rae's sketch of a Wagnerian diva entertaining at Las Vegas is, for example, benignly savage, and her virginal rendition of a somewhat adulterated Elizabethan madrigal is a major contribution to cultural misunderstanding.

Intermittently, "The Littlest Revue" gives an intense pleasure. Apart from Miss Rae, I was much taken with Mr. Joel Grey's dexterous Calypso, and a skit involving Mr. Larry Storch (an accomplished mimic) as a lecherous Middle Eastern potentate whose UN diplomatic immunity causes terror in the supermarkets of Peter Cooper Village. A certain feverish topicality of wit is the revue's chief flaw, and beyond this, it is remarkably devoid of music of any distinction.

I HAVE written so often in disagreeable mockery of the work of Messrs. Rodgers and Hammerstein, that the pleasure of contrition colors the praise I should wish to offer to their "The King and I." This musical play, with its uncommon reticence and gently spurious Oriental charm, was lately given a sterling revival at City Center, and all of its genteel, small-scale poetry seemed to me again direct and touching. It is notable in the Rodgers and Hammerstein canon for the poise with which it avoids rhetoric and cant, and also for an unusual fullness in the drawing of psychological relationships. The music of "Oklahoma" and "Carousel" and "South Pacific" has passed into the domain of public sentiment; it is hard to imagine the earnest little fables which support it interesting a future audience. But I would hazard the hope that "The



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King and I" might enjoy a certain minor and continuing affection; in it, one sees the American musical theatre, not perhaps at its liveliest nor its most characteristic, but surely at its most attractive.

RICHARD HAYES.

# THE SCREEN

## LIFE IS REAL, LIFE IS EARNEST

I AM SURE that Richard Brooks, who directed the first-rate cast in "The Catered Affair," didn't realize what a sad movie he was making. It's a fascinating film, but I began to remember, as sorrow piled on sorrow in the lives of these poor drab Bronx Irish, Fanny Brice's hilarious parody on Russian plays and one line in particular: "It *always* rains in Russia." Well, it doesn't *always* rain in the Bronx; there are a few moments of sunshine, as when the young bride and groom (beautifully played by Debbie Reynolds and Rod Taylor) express their love and hopes for the future, or when the bride's uncle (Barry Fitzgerald) forgets his ills and pursues his own chipper courtship of the eager widow (Dorothy Stickney); but on the whole "The Catered Affair" sees life for this Irish family in the Bronx as a vale of tears.

At first, when Debbie announces she is going to marry Rod soon so they can use the car offered them for the honeymoon, they plan a quiet, simple wedding without reception or guests. The family isn't much interested in the arrangements one way or another. Pop (Ernest Borgnine), who has been saving for a long time so he and his partner can buy a license to own their taxi-cab, is actually relieved. Mom (Bette Davis) is indifferent. Then things begin to pop. The uncle who lives with them walks out in a huff because none of the uncles is to be invited. The neighbors make aspersions about this hurried, hush-hush wedding. And in a most painful, keeping-up-with-the-Joneses scene, the in-laws (Robert Simon, Madge Kennedy) come to dinner and brag about what they are giving the bride and groom. Mom, already seething, decides it will be a big wedding and a big reception complete with fuss, flowers and caterers. From then on, sweet Debbie, likable Rod, patient Borgnine and everyone else are caught. The guest list grows. The expenses mount. The honeymoon in the borrowed car will have to be changed. Seeing his savings go, Pop cancels his plans to buy the taxi license. On the surface, some of this, with its pointed satire on organized society, is very funny, but finally it becomes almost unbearably sad.

Gore Vidal has written a moving and literate script from Paddy Chayefsky's TV play. But stretched to such length as it is, the unhappy incidents become repetitive and contrived. In spite of its faults, however, the movie is engrossing and Richard Brooks has guided his cast in excellent performances.

Although the finale of "The Catered Affair" comes much too quickly and patly after the turmoil, it ends on a clear note of hope and faith in the basic decency of people. Pop can smile now, but in the midst of his troubles he had summed things up well: "The whole Irish population of the Bronx wants that catered affair." "We are throwing away our whole life savings on one meal—and a breakfast at that."

PRODUCER William Perlberg and Director-script-writer George Seaton, who have collaborated on such good films as "Little Boy Lost" and "The Country Girl," have teamed up again, but this time on an effort that is hardly worth their talents. For all its pretentious World War II, South Pacific setting, "The Proud and Profane" is little more than a soap opera about a Red Cross worker (Deborah Kerr) who came to New Caledonia to learn how her husband died, and a tough Marine colonel (William Holden) who, because of his sad childhood, carries a mean chip on his shoulder to hide his insecurity. Their unlikely romance leads to love, talk of marriage, her pregnancy, her discovery that he is already married, her miscarriage and illness, his being wounded, her realization that her husband died unhappy because she dominated and ruined his life, and finally to forgiveness in the present. No one expects soap-opera characters to be particularly believable, but handsome Holden and Kerr don't even make these characters likable or interesting. Thelma Ritter, Dewey Martin and others do much better in the secondary roles.

UNUSUAL in 1956, which is having quite a cycle of movies using the war merely as background for romance, is "Cockleshell Heroes." Actually about one phase of the war, and attractively filmed in CinemaScope and Technicolor in England and Portuguese waters, it tells the story of a group of Royal Marines who were specially trained to paralyze shipping in the German-held harbor of Bordeaux. I'm not sure which part of the film is the more exciting—the training of the men at Portsmouth, with its fascinating shots of the exercises and discipline as well as the antagonism

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between the major in charge (José Ferrer) and his adjutant (Trevor Howard); or the execution of Operation Cockleshell when ten men go up the Gironde in their kayaks and wreck the harbor. Some of the horseplay in the early scenes is rather phoney, but the film as a whole (directed by José Ferrer) has an authentic air which adds to its distinction. Without wallowing in sentiment or fancy histrionics, this picture, based on an actual raid from which only two men returned, shows the stuff of which true heroes are made.

PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

# COMMUNICATIONS

## "ALGER HISS AT PRINCETON"

Washington, D. C.

TO the Editors: In my opinion your statements about the Hiss controversy in The Commonweal [June 1] do not meet the usually high standards of your editorials. I submit the following commentary for your consideration and that of your readers.

Of course, the fact that Princeton University trustees declared that they did not approve of the invitation of Alger Hiss to this university did not relieve the administration of its responsibility in this matter. For the administration the problem of whether or not the Hiss invitation should be revoked consisted of the definition of their area of responsibility, and once that had been determined, how they wished to interpret and defend academic freedom.

In the past the administration has exercised the right to approve speakers who have been selected by the Whig-Clio Society to address the student body. Because Mr. Hiss' invitation was "slipped by" the Dean's Office, an error in procedure established by tradition was committed. Hence, the university, by not taking action to revoke the invitation, gave their tacit approval to it. The fact that this traditional prerogative is still being exercised by the administration only makes it more clear that the ultimate responsibility for the realization of Mr. Hiss' appearance was theirs, not that of the Whig-Clio Society, which cannot truly be called an autonomous organization. The aforementioned veto power which the University exercises makes such a definition untenable.

The responsibility of the University's administrative body having been established, the second matter, that of the interpretation and defense of academic freedom, should be considered. You have stated that, "Once the publicity started, to have overruled the students would have looked like abject surrender to outside pressure," and have alluded to the "dangers to the University's freedom to act like a university." In the first place, no matter what it may have "looked like," considering this pressure as an element in their decision of whether or not the invitation should be overruled made the authorities willy-nilly victims of public opinion which ostensibly they were trying to avoid. What did they accomplish, but to make it "look like" they were not victims of public pressure, when actually they were! This would seem an achievement of doubtful merit. In the second place, the freedom which was exercised by Princeton University was that of giving tacit approval to a very questionable person to speak on matters for which he was not ethically or politically qualified. During the three years preceding the Geneva Conference, to which Mr. Hiss devoted the majority of his discussion, he was far removed from the affairs of the world, residing in jail, convicted of perjury. Such an abuse of freedom is unworthy of any university.

Finally, of course, the fact that Mr. Hiss spoke to only a small part of the student body and was not invited to give a commencement address does not have any relation to the correctness or incorrectness of the University's decision not to revoke this invitation. Such reasoning would create the absurd situation whereby those responsible for the education of American students could freely approve discussions of democracy by unrepentent Communist spies on Tuesdays and Thursdays in the afternoon—as long as a small part of the student body was in attendance.

ALEXANDER B. CARVER, JR.

Norton, Mass.

TO the Editors: Mr. McDermott's letter concerning Alger Hiss' appearance at Princeton reminded me that several years ago I listened with distinct pleasure to another ex-convict, James Michael Curley, address the Harvard Law School Forum, that university's most respected extra-curricular platform. I am sure that the danger was greater that, under the influence of the persuasive Mayor Curley, some Harvard men would succumb to the sorts of corruption for which he was convicted than that Mr. Hiss would make perjurers, subversives or even "wrong thinkers" out of his Princeton audience,. And probably Mayor Curley's Harvard speech on machine politics gained more prestige for his type of political boss than Mr. Hiss' lecture earned him. Yet no one suggested that the invitation to Mayor Curley overstepped the limits of academic freedom or that Harvard should blush at the fact that the record would "recite this lecture as part of what was offered to [Harvard] students in their pursuit of what the university offered as an education." Perhaps Princeton's excited critics should view the affair with a little more sense of humor.

HANS A. WOLF.



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# The Severe and Light-hearted World of Saroyan

MAMA I LOVE YOU. By William Saroyan. Atlantic-Little, Brown. $3.75.

By THOMAS F. CURLEY

THE BEST review of this book was written by Edmund Wilson in *The Boys in the Back Room,* some fifteen years ago. After recognizing Mr. Saroyan's "natural felicity of touch" and after quoting him to the effect that no matter what he did it came out right, Mr. Wilson remarked, "What *is* wrong and what his charm cannot conceal, is the use to which he is putting his gifts." "No writer," he concludes, "lives a charmed life." That judgment is as pertinent today as it was then. The remarkable thing is that despite years of abuse Saroyan's gifts have not deserted him. This is not faint praise, it is blame. He could not write like the telephone company if he tried.

Years ago Saroyan told us that "the operation of imagination in the realm of the normal is practically unknown." *The Daring Young Man on the Flying Trapeze* and *My Name is Aram* created lively and abundantly imagined worlds that were thoroughly normal. One had to agree when he said of himself, ". . . the writer simply wrote the words while his spirit enjoyed their meaning." Whether *Mama I Love You* is within the realm of the normal is beside the point when one considers the poverty of imagination it reveals.

A nine-year old girl named Twink, or Frog, tells the story. The daughter of divorced parents, she lives happily with her mother on Macaroni Lane out there in California until one night the baby sitter fails to arrive, thus depriving Mama Girl of her party-going. Mama Girl is an actress. On the spur of the moment she decides to go to New York and become a Broadway star. She does. Twink goes with her, of course; a good thing, too, since it is because of her that Mama Girl gets a part. A daughter-and-mother team and, to fill the cup to overflowing, Twink's father is commissioned to write the music, and on opening night he flies in from Paris. The play is a hit, the family is united—for how long we don't know—Mama Girl is a star and Twink is well on her way to becoming a twenty-game winner for the New York Giants. The point of the play, which is about life and death and a magical bouncing ball, is that, "in spite of everything—in spite of the terrible unattractiveness of the world they live in—they go on. They keep trying."

It won't do. There are no Armenians around. All the people, no matter how hard they try not to be, are kind and good. There is plenty of good food and drink and hard work and intelligence. Still no Armenians, and you remember what the author wrote of Fresno, California, ". . . so nicely, and so delightfully balanced as to give the spirit of the growing writer almost exactly the right proportions of severity and warmth, and firmness and flexibility. . . ."

No doubt we are never satisfied with the maturity of those we have admired in our youth and their early manhood. Yet it is no mere cavil to notice the word, *severity,* in the above quotation. A few years later, in the dedicatory letter to *The Human Comedy,* Saroyan wrote to his father, "I have written it as simply as possible, with that blending of the *severe* and the light-hearted which is especially yours, and our family's." [My italics.] This severity, prized by Saroyan, had always been one of his weakest qualities, and in *The Human Comedy* it all but disappears.

What caused this deterioration? Saroyan has never deferred to popular taste. Fear of declining sales did not prevent him from heeding Kipling's advice—passed on to him by Edmund Wilson—to the effect that once you know what you can do, do something else. The answer lies in his temperament. But that is not specific enough. Let us look at Aram Garoghlanian.

Saroyan has said of himself that he is ". . . not, certainly, *not* Aram Garoghlanian." Aram was a writer. He had poise and wit and more words in his heart than tongue could utter. Then he left the small Californian town he grew up in and rode a bus to New York. He passed through Reno and saw the bright lights. He rode through the desert at night and in the morning watched the sun come up. Perhaps for the first time in his life he could not think of ". . . three little words with which to clarify the situation." There it was, "Nothing at all." A sullen silence only. The room he took in Salt Lake City for the night was haunted, full of evil things. He left it very early and was at the bus depot ahead of time. And then, as if by appointment, a preacher came up to him and asked, "Son, are you saved?"

Since the young free-thinker was still shaky from the desert and from the evil room, he listened to the preacher. As it turned out, being saved was the easiest thing in the world. All he had to do was stop trying to figure things out and believe. Believe what? Everything he could think of. Aram thought he was kidding the old man, but as the book ends he tells us himself, "In less than ten minutes after the bus left Salt Lake City I was believing everything, left and right, as the missionary had said, and it's been that way with me ever since."

I think that joke had more meaning than either Aram Garoghlanian or William Saroyan recognized. Writing of A. E., Yeats regretted that he was not driven into the "impersonal deeps where the man shudders." Saroyan was in those deeps in the desert. His personality was no good to him there. The unfortunate thing for him, as an artist, was that a mistaken interpretation of St. Paul saved him. You can hear voices in that sullen silence. The difficulty about waiting for Godot on Broadway is that the noise you make will almost certainly frighten his messenger.



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# Apartheid in South Africa

NAUGHT FOR YOUR COMFORT. By Trevor Huddleston. Doubleday. $3.75.

By NED O'GORMAN

THIS BOOK, written by the Anglican Father Huddleston, is a calculated narrative of the blatant language of justice and prudence used to justify terrible sins of national preservation. South African racial policy under the direction of the Union Government creates a pattern of extermination, based on actions that pretend to the most careful purity of intention. In America the racial issue is quite different. The destruction of a race is irrevocably condemned in the Constitution, and with time and wisdom it is certain that the Negro shall become free again. In South Africa the problem is universally frightening and there is no Constitution to protect the possibility of action leading to liberation. There is little hope that the government will do anything but force the African to carry water and hew wood.

During twelve years in South Africa Father Huddleston has learned to love, not South Africans, but *those* men, in *that* filthy hut, with *that* broken body, in *that* country. His book records quite pitilessly that careful subjection whereby men can enjoy land stolen from the African and use their bound, black bodies and minds to serve the white man's will, the will of the Apartheid man to whom white dominion is survival.

This book's great value is the inclusion of incident that clarifies ideas of charity and equality and democracy. Only the particular really means anything when there is action to be done. And there are incidents here! Sophiatown, where the Africans have freehold rights and their exodus from that place to Meadowland where they are at the Union's mercy; squatters in South Newclare, swarming in the square after their exodus from tin huts and a terror of sickness and overcrowding; the Tsotsi, the wild children of the suburbs, who have broken from their slow sickness and have turned upon each other to destroy themselves; the beautiful children who crowd the streets and the mission schools in a country that has given such terrible visions to their childhood. And Trevor Huddleston is there to watch and listen and witness. Like Michael Scott, he prophesies with that especial force of a dedicated priest.

The documentation of the Union's policy comes only as a promise. The Churches, how badly they fare! The Negro has been hidden in a wall of Acts—the Native Urban Act, The Native Resettlement Act, The Group Areas Act, The Bantu Education Act, the Removal Scheme. Churchmen often moved with strange watchfulness — too careful in estimating, too quick in debasing the too adjustable language of charity and love to national policy that is anti-African.

Father Huddleston writes:

"Christian love is so searching, so demanding and so revolutionary in its scope that it has no relationship to the thing which is so often called by its name . . . . that shadow of sentimental figure so often invoked by Christians who want to live comfortably with injustice and intolerance."

And again: "The sin of racial pride, the evil of the doctrine of Apartheid—these are the things which must be condemned by the church and their consequences clearly and unmistakably proclaimed. This is prophecy. It is also politics."

When a church refuses itself a place in a nation's political morality it denies its mission. There is a great lesson in Trevor Huddleston's book. It is this: there is nowhere that men go, there is nothing that men suffer that a church cannot suffer, where a church cannot go.

Yet there is the special spiritual genius of that politician who does not accept the suffering and disunity among men but works to give hope to the hopeless and wholeness to the dismembered human society. Somewhere Silone wrote that unless men *can* love one another there is not much sense to political action. Trevor Huddleston's career brings brotherhood out of the shelter of affection into the noise of the world where it must move or die of its own dialectic.

# Cool and Civilized Violence

A PERFECT WOMAN. By L. P. Hartley. Knopf. $3.95.

By NORA MAGID

NOT the least curious aspect of this extraordinary novel is its dust-jacket claim that it is an "endearing comedy." "Comedy" it may possibly be: its general air is one of irreverence, its ending is a triumph of sorts, and its very civilized English protagonists do, after all, sit around their various tea tables making highly civilized English chit-chat. At least on the verbal level, they are frightfully house-broken. "Endearing" raises the question. Away from the tea cups, there is a strain of uninhibited, if understated, violence. There is passion and there is murder. But rarely is there deliberate unkindness or ungentility. If his people are preoccupied in the looking after of their own interests, they are also quite busy altruistically protecting the rights and feelings of others, and they harbor all kinds of rationalizations (scrupulously dissected by Mr. Hartley) for the destruction they work.

Mr. Hartley's talents run primarily along the lines of the politely macabre (*The Traveling Grave*) and the amusingly analytic (*The West Wind*). He is particularly acute when he writes about the wonderfully complicated and terrifying world of children (*The Go-Between*). His eye is cool and clear and his tongue is sharp and unsentimental. It is of special interest, then, to see what he accomplishes when he combines these singular



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attributes into what might on the surface appear to be a love story. A woman in the country tires of her philistine husband, and has an affair with another man. But it is not this simple. The sum-total is a neatly constructed, many-ironied satire, in which each of the four main characters becomes involved in an alliance that is simultaneously a betrayal, and in which the gains and losses are difficult to assess.

Isabel, the perfect woman of the title, has been successively daughter to an ineffectual saint, and roommate to a bohemian with the credo that chastity is constipating. She is currently wife to an accountant "as conventional as his face." He is a prosperous petty bourgeois, and in her own eyes she is an amalgamation of Hedda Gabler and Madame Bovary. "She knew what was likely to happen when a woman of slightly superior social standing, decidedly superior brains, and greatly superior imaginative quality married a dullish man and lived in the provinces, and she was on her guard against it . . . . . but latent in her were feelings she had not quite subdued when she accepted Harold and his gospel of conformity."

Obviously, here is a candidate ripe for adventure. When it materializes in the person of Alec Goodrich, a client of her husband's, she meets trouble more than half way: she is anxious for artistic as well as for personal reasons to salvage him from the "terrific cat-and-mouser" who has—these are Mr. Hartley's metaphors—been making a nutmeg grater out of him. Critics have condemmed his books as the output of a misogynist, and she feels that exposure to a good woman will cause him to produce a great novel, a happy one. Released from bondage to a harpy, he will draw his strength from life as a whole.

The chain of involvement is complex. Harold, when he first takes over Alec's whimsical and chaotic business affairs, wonders at his initial resentment of him. Alec is a man alone, and Harold is part of "a united body, the strongest and most resistant unit that history could show—a family." But when Harold becomes a knight-errant, to save the damsel (a bar-maid whose English is limited to "please yes") from the monster, Alec, he loses all timidity. Upright, solemn, priggish upholder of the status quo, model of a propriety so rigid that he has never once set foot even tentatively on the primrose path, he discovers a hitherto hidden aptitude for intrigue, and slithers serenely into the role of seducer. His tidily compartmentalized mind slides open to reveal yet another pigeon-hole, in which he can file away his one skeleton. He departs from his cosy mother-and-wife dominated world, and, exuding masculine self-confidence, learns that he has the makings of a giant-killer. He even feels that he could address the inarticulate Irma in German. Isabel continues for her part to assume that she is calling the tunes. Alec plays off all sides in order to cultivate material for the forthcoming novel. Only the children remain on the periphery, and their games reflect the web that traps the adults.

The climax requires the subtle


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juggling of a good many ambiguities and paradoxes. Mr. Hartley remains throughout as tongue-in-cheek and detached as his hero, who, at one time is said to suffer a nervous breakdown, and whose teeth turn up in a tumbler, but whose vulnerability we cannot accept, despite its outer manifestations. It is as if an Ibsen were to undertake a tale of human frailty, and superimpose on the morbid realities of it the mannered flip elegance of an Oscar Wilde.

## A Ruling Class

THE POWER ELITE. By C. Wright Mills. Oxford. $6.

By MICHAEL HARRINGTON

LET ME begin with a frank statement of prejudice: I approached *The Power Elite* with the preconceived opinion (based on *New Men of Power, White Collar* and, to a certain extent, *Character and Social Structure*) that C. Wright Mills was the most imaginative and brilliant of all the sociologists writing from American universities. This new book hardened me in my attitude; indeed, it enhanced my judgment of Mr. Mills.

There is a sense in which *The Power Elite* is part polemic, and one can arrive at an estimation of the book by seeing what and whom it opposes. For Mr. Mills has set himself up as the merciless critic of what he calls the "American celebration," that growing mood of the last decade which has not only seen the emergence of a "new conservatism," but the crisis of the old liberalism as well. He stands opposed to the rediscovery of America carried on in the *Partisan Review* symposium a few years ago, to A. A. Berle's hope for a corporation conscience, David Lilienthal's admiration for business bigness, G. K. Gailbraith's thesis of countervailing powers.

The center of this new liberal conservatism is the notion that the United States has ceased to be a class society, that it has solved the fundamental problems which led to the catastrophe of the thirties, that it has achieved, in the lyrical words of one panegyrist in *Commentary*, a classless society, a utopian socialism that lacks only socialists. What Mr. Mills brings sharply home is that it is true that the old class structure has changed, but that this is a long way from saying that social classes have vanished. His central thesis is that America today has a new elite, a new ruling class.

Here is how Mr. Mills sums up his point: "Those who still hold that the power system reflects the balancing society often confuse the present era with earlier times of American history, and confuse the top and the bottom levels of the present system with its middle levels. When it is generalized into a master model of the power system, the theory of balance becomes historically unspecific; whereas in fact, as a model, it should be specified as applicable only to certain phases of United States development—notably the Jacksonian period and, under quite differing circumstances, the early and middle New Deal."

To this image of the "balancing society" (Mr. Galbraith's countervalence, David Riesman's shuttling of interest groups), Mills counterposes a picture of American society with a new elite. It is made up of the corporate managers, of the military with its new prestige, and of the governmental bureaucracy. Its roots are in a new situation: that the American resistance to Stalinism has been primarily military and has given a new political, economic and social importance to generals and admirals; that the economy has at its base a govern-

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ment intervention (largely military, or related, expenditure) many times that of the New Deal.

One consequence of this general situation has been prosperity. This is the root of the American celebration—that there has been no major economic crisis since the thirties, that productivity, national income, etc. have been on the rise. But Mr. Mills goes behind this surface fact; he seeks the social price of the new wealth. It is, he finds, a pattern of ever more concentrated power on the top, of a mass society on the bottom, and of a powerless middle level which is actually irrelevant to decision.

But Mr. Mills does not stop with a simple analysis. He evaluates. The values in which he believes are those of democracy, of increasing the real popular participation in decision, of deciding on the basis of rational debate. And he finds his values opposed at every turn—for him, America is now "a conservative country without any conservative ideology," a center of "crackpot realism," its power system is one of "organized irresponsibility."

These are harsh words. Witness, for example, the anguished response of A. A. Berle in his New York *Times* review of *The Power Elite*. And yet, one must choose between Mr. Berle's dream of the development of a corporate conscience and Mr. Mills impressive documentation of a very contrary reality. Whatever the choice, Mr. Mills' book is one of the most important to have appeared in many years. It is a refreshing, honest, angry relief from the mood of the American celebration.

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# Lamb and Lion

THE LIFE OF THOMAS CRANMER. By Theodore Maynard. Regnery. $4.50.

By DORIS GRUMBACH

THEODORE MAYNARD is an historian to whom an era of history is capable of yielding up enough material for a number of colorful and provocative personal



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portraits. He has proven his theory by his thorough exploitation of the sixteenth century. Henry VIII, Mary Tudor, Queen Elizabeth—these violent, bloody and stimulating figures have made books for him, and now he has reshuffled his mass of research and dredged up the long-misunderstood Thomas Cranmer, Archbishop of Canterbury for Henry and Edward VI and Mary Tudor.

Cranmer almost wholly eludes strict categorization. Catholic critics (Belloc was one of these) have been generally harsh on him; Protestant writers tend to be indulgent toward his chameleon character. But Mr. Maynard seems to this reader to have struck exactly the right notes of calm, fair, charitable appraisal. He sees poor Cranmer as first, a kindly though mediocre priest, a good-natured "somewhat ineffectual person . . . not at all aggressive . . . sometimes rather timid. He may not emerge with much glory, yet little, if any, of the disgrace of that period became attached to him." In later years Queen Mary, who sent him to his death, regarded him as "a pleasant old gentleman"; always he was precisely that, the agreeable religious lackey who was an unprotesting spectator to the first years of the Reformation. Maynard notes without bitterness his obsequious disposition, his failure to take a decisive position until the last twenty minutes of his life. His view is humane, without the usual harsh black-and-white clichés. Desiring no high position, he was propelled into it; holding it with diffidence, he wanted to create no fuss and make no trouble for anyone.

Cranmer seems to have slid with awful inevitability into Protestantism. At first, under the almost-Catholic Henry, he was prudently silent about his defection, for he was held to his faith, not by "blazing conviction," but by a strong concern with "routine and formalism." His enthusiasm (it was never of a high order) grew under the relaxed Protestant codes and he wrote for Anglican England the *Book of Common Prayer*, a book of uncommonly beautiful prose, a strong departure from the Missal toward a vernacular service. His end was dramatic: for the first time in his career of mediocrity he sealed history's view of him by going to a martyr's death defiantly. The Catholic lamb, at the stake, was turned into the Protestant lion as he thrust his right hand into the fire and roared: "And forasmuch as I have written many things contrary to what I believe in my heart, my hand shall first be burned."

The history here is impeccable; one may carp only at Mr. Maynard's style, which continues to reach toward the overelaborate and the fancy. He expresses admiration for John Donne's long sentences and "magnificent prose," and his own apprenticeship to the style is occasionally too evident. Otherwise the book is a credit to the kind of fair Catholic scholarship so imperative in the sensitive landscapes of the Reformation.


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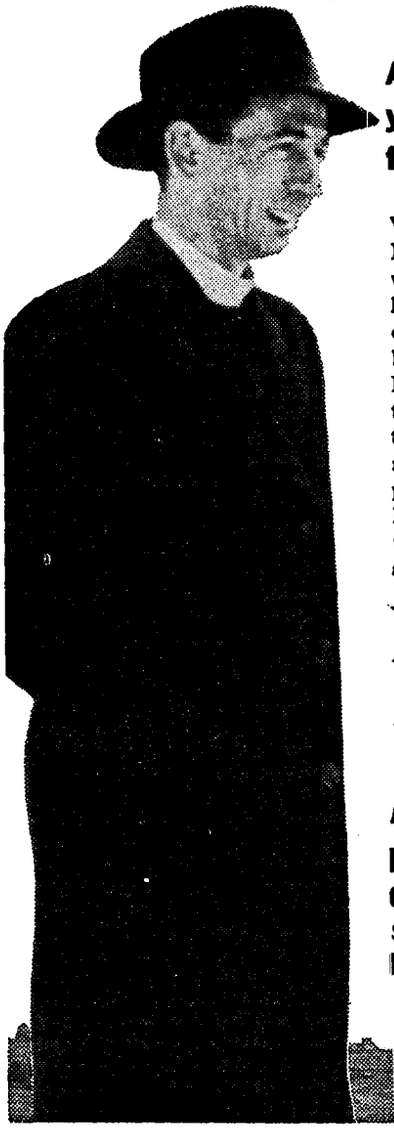

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